CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.588
21 March 1991

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 March 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Serguei B. Batsanov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

GE.91-60571/3076B

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 588th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset I wish to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference to the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Ivan Garvalov, who is our first speaker today. The First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs has been actively involved in multilateral diplomacy and has vast experience in matters relating to the United Nations, including multilateral disarmament. Before taking up his present high position he headed the Human Rights Department and the United Nations and Disarmament Department in the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and therefore he has been dealing with matters within the competence of our Conference, with which he is fully familiar. He has also worked in India, Myanmar, Indonesia and Egypt and in the Bulgarian mission to the United Nations. I am personally extremely happy to welcome him as our two countries have maintained traditionally close and friendly relations. I am looking forward to his statement today, which I am sure we will all follow with particular interest.

I should also like to welcome warmly the new representative of France, Ambassador Gérard Errera, who is attending our plenary meeting today for the first time. Ambassador Errera is a distinguished career diplomat who has served in a number of positions of responsibility in the French Foreign Ministry as a member of the cabinet of the Foreign Minister, and also in the Atomic Energy Commission. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I wish him every success in the performance of his duties here at the Conference, and I pledge my readiness to continue with him the close cooperation which marked our relations with his predecessor. As Ambassador Errera replaces Ambassador Pierre Morel, who has been recalled for highly important duties with his Government in Paris, I should like to ask Ambassador Errera to convey to Ambassador Morel our best wishes in his new responsibilities. Ambassador Morel played an outstanding role in our Conference. He was its President in August 1987. In 1988, Ambassador Morel was appointed Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. Under his chairmanship the Committee on Chemical Weapons made considerable progress in the negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. I cannot omit to mention the important role played by Ambassador Morel in the preparations for the conduct of and, of course, the successful conclusion of the Paris Conference of States Parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and Other Interested States, the Final Declaration of which provided this Conference with much-needed political impetus. Ambassador Morel discharged all these heavy responsibilities with exceptional political ability and diplomatic competence, which, together with his well-known personal qualities, earned him so many friends here in the Conference.

Allow me now to make the opening statement which I would like to make as President.

It is a great honour for the delegation of the USSR to perform the duties of presiding over the Conference, the most important multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, in March-May 1991, despite the fact that this honour is the natural result of rotation. I would like to assure all members of the

(The President)

Conference of my intention to approach the important functions of President with a full sense of responsibility, and I will make every effort to facilitate the reaching of agreement both on questions of substance relating to the work of the Conference and on a number of procedural aspects that are deservedly of interest to delegations.

It will hardly be a novel thought if I note that our Conference, like all international structures, is passing through an extremely interesting and important period. At times the rapidly developing world situation goes through very hazardous turns, as we witnessed quite recently. And yet the prevailing trend is still the shaping of a new model of security based on respect for the right of peoples to choose, to settle questions by peaceful means and to strengthen dialogue and mutual understanding. Under these circumstances the significance of arms limitation and disarmament is not diminished but enhanced. There is every ground, I believe, for extending this consideration to our Conference, which is the main organ for multilateral negotiations in this field. It is another matter to ensure that the negotiating process in the field of disarmament does not lag behind other political processes in the world, but rather goes hand in hand with them, thus paving the way towards new security structures in which the military component would occupy a smaller and smaller place.

I represent a country which experienced in a particularly painful way the burden of the arms race, and the difficulties, including the objective difficulties, of the disarmament process, as well as the difficult process of realizing that beyond a certain line even the most destructive weapons do not add to security, but can diminish it. The Soviet Union is now living through a complex, critical period in its history. The society has emerged from the state of former equilibrium, but it has not yet acquired a new basis for consolidation, although the need for such a basis and the lack of prospects for methods of settling our internal problems by force is being ever more clearly and extensively perceived. In that context, we are particularly in need of favourable external conditions and of further progress along the way to curbing the arms race, not only in the bilateral Soviet-American or European areas, but also on the global scale. Hence our permanent interest in the efficient functioning of the Conference on Disarmament.

In connection with the fact that the Soviet representative is performing the duties of President of the Conference from this week onwards, the Foreign Minister of the USSR, A.A. Bessmertnykh, has requested me to convey to the Conference on Disarmament and all the delegations taking part in its proceedings, as well as the Secretary-General of the Conference, his wishes for success in resolving the tasks of the utmost importance which are on the agenda of this forum. He also instructed me to underline the unchanging nature of the Soviet Union's consistent course towards lower levels of military confrontation, and towards real disarmament. As regards the Conference on Disarmament, Minister Bessmertnykh asked me to note that this involves first of all the earliest possible completion of negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons, ensuring a qualitative shift in considering the problems of the complete prohibition of nuclear tests and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a constructive search for mutually acceptable solutions on other agenda items of this unique multilateral negotiating forum.

(The President)

As I take up the post of President of the Conference I note with a feeling of profound satisfaction and - if I am honest - relief, that the work on practically all topics is on the right track, that five ad hoc committees have been established and are working, that the mechanism of informal plenary meetings and the mechanism of discussing ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the Conference are operating. This is very much to the credit of two of my predecessors, the distinguished Ambassador Rasaputram of Sri Lanka and the distinguished Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden. I am extremely grateful to them for their achievements in guiding the work of the Conference, and my task, as I see it, is not to mar the sound legacy which I have received from them. In my work I would like to rely, as my predecessors did, on close coordination and cooperation with all delegations and with the Conference secretariat, to whom we all owe a great deal. Naturally, I am always at the service of delegates, and would urge them not to hesitate to turn to me with any questions they may have.

That concludes my introductory statement, and I would like to propose to you that we should now proceed to the business of today's plenary meeting. I have on my list of speakers today, as I have already indicated, the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, as well as the representatives of Nigeria, Japan and Venezuela. I now give the floor to the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Ivan Garvalov.

Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria): Thank you very much for the kind words which you addressed to me in introducing me to the distinguished representatives at the Conference. I extend to you, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations on your accession to this high office. I would like to assure you of the support and cooperation of the Bulgarian delegation. I also express my gratitude to your predecessors, Ambassador Rasaputram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, for the energy and skill with which they conducted the work of the Conference on Disarmament in the first months of this year's session. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Komatina, the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, and all the staff of the secretariat, whose participation in our common endeavour here is highly valued by my delegation.

The Conference on Disarmament is one of the few forums where major international changes that have a direct bearing on international security are felt almost immediately and tangibly. The international community has witnessed such recent changes. They are, I would say, of a fundamental nature. This enables us to speak about shaping a qualitatively new political environment. It is precisely in such a new environment that disarmament will evolve, including its global aspects which are examined by this body. In its turn, my country, Bulgaria, has also been involved in a process of profound radical democratization of its political structures and economic system. The pace of the reform cuts across political, economic, social and public institutions. Bulgaria has reviewed and is rearranging the principles and priorities of its foreign policy. In fact they are qualitatively new; they determine my country's orientation towards all-round integration with the existing and newly emerging European structures, including security structures. We are seriously and thoroughly reassessing our national approach

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

to issues of domestic and international security, and the role of arms control and disarmament. We now approach things primarily through the prism of Bulgaria's national interests as they appear in today's new international set-up. And of course the concern to strengthen international security and stability remains important for us. Our foreign policy is now independent, predicated on pragmatism and realities.

The sudden changes in Europe and throughout the world certainly have a direct bearing upon the security of Bulgaria, small as it may be, for it is situated in a European subregion which is important from a geo-political point of view. Bulgaria will seek security guarantees - political, economic and military - along all political parameters where we may meet with understanding and mutual interest. Of particular importance in this respect is for us to cooperate with the permanent members of the Security Council, the European States, political, security and economic alliances and organizations such as NATO, the Western European Union, the European Council, the Council of Europe and others, and with our neighbours. Bulgaria wishes to preserve its relations with traditional political partners, bring them into line with the new circumstances and place them on a mutually beneficial basis.

Bulgaria is very conscious of the importance of maintaining good-neighbourly security relations in the Balkans. We have been promoting a long-term and durable basis for mutually beneficial cooperation. No neighbouring country ought to feel threatened by any hostile action coming from Bulgarian territory. We continue to adjust our armed forces in full structural and quantitative conformity with the requirements of the principle of reasonable sufficiency for defence. We are resolved to implement our commitments under the Treaty on the reduction of conventional armed forces and armaments in Europe. Bulgaria wishes to see this Treaty benefiting from favourable conditions for the purpose of its ratification and entry into force. Bulgaria is interested in the negotiations on future reductions to continue on the basis of a new mandate. We hope that our partners in these negotiations will take into account the existence of certain asymmetries and military imbalances in the Balkan subregion. They have somehow been deepening of late.

My Government wishes to see in the remaining multilateral alliances a guarantee of its own security as well as the stability of various European subregions. We look upon confidence-building measures in Europe, and also in specific subregions, as an important means of strengthening security and stability in the continent. Bulgaria will also search for security guarantees on a broader international level. The latest international developments have shown how successful collective action on the part of the international community can be against aggression and the annexation of a small country. This new phenomenon strengthens our hopes in the triumph of a new and just world order in which the right to independence and the free development of all countries, be they small or big, will be guaranteed. Yes, we do believe that this is possible! Bulgaria lent its unreserved support to the actions of the multilateral forces in the Persian Gulf. The active Bulgarian participation in the United Nations efforts has been motivated by its belief in the world organization's ability to have an effective impact for the preservation of international peace and the security of individual Member States.

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

My country has no ambition to discover or apply some new and unknown principles to achieve reliable security. In our view, the best guiding principle is the genuine desire to establish civilized relationships based on mutual recognition of the right to security and universal human values. Bulgaria wishes to state clearly and unequivocally: we do not seek, nor will we ever seek, security for ourselves alone; we do not seek security at the expense of others. We expect the same attitude on the part of our partners, and we will do our best to reach this objective.

In the foreseeable future arms control and disarmament will continue to occupy a central place among the various ways and means of ensuring Bulgaria's national security. Before I address some of the concrete items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to emphasize that the Bulgarian approach towards disarmament is no longer guided or motivated by political and ideological concepts that are already outdated. At the same time Bulgaria will retain the positive and constructive experience and cooperation we have had in that field.

Among the concrete items on the agenda my delegation attaches prime importance to the priority of the negotiations to conclude a chemical weapons convention. Bulgaria has declared that it does not possess chemical weapons, that it has no intention whatsoever of acquiring such weapons and that it is ready to sign the future convention immediately. My country has initiated the procedure whereby it will drop its reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. While it is true in principle that negotiations are a give-and-take process, in this particular case Bulgaria is not giving up anything by joining such a convention. From the point of view of its national security Bulgaria can only gain from a convention which will eliminate all existing stocks of chemical weapons, prevent future production of chemical weapons and contain reliable guarantees that it will be strictly complied with, and may earn the widest possible adherence. For us this convention will be even more acceptable should it succeed in solving in the best possible and just way such issues as assistance, economic and technical cooperation in the field of civil chemical industry, and financial and organizational aspects.

Proceeding from these basic guidelines, the Bulgarian delegation will submit to this Conference the concrete position of the Bulgarian Government on the outstanding issues. Another important issue for us is that of "negative security guarantees". The way in which they have been tackled so far is reminiscent of another era. The sweeping changes in the international political climate are an encouragement to believe that this issue can be resolved. There is room for a fresh look and flexibility on the part of all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear. Bulgaria is satisfied that, following a protracted pause, it has become possible to set up a working body on the nuclear test ban. There is perhaps no other problem in the field of disarmament where the ink and the words have flowed so freely and in such quantities. May I just say that a comprehensive treaty banning all nuclear tests in all environments and for all time is achievable both in one step and in several steps? The Conference on Disarmament can and should play an active role in this process. There should be no obstacles in the way of the Conference. It will be advisable to concentrate all efforts on such an important aspect as verification, for instance.

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

If a realistic approach is adopted, then a number of measures could be agreed upon in the field of confidence-building and openness in outer space activities. Bulgaria is also interested in the conclusion of an international convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons, as well as on the reliable protection of peaceful nuclear facilities. Many possibilities also exist for progress in other fields within the Conference's terms of reference. To conclude, let me say that Bulgaria will do everything within its power to further multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament, and that definitely means the Conference on Disarmament. My country will make use of all that is positive and constructive in its contribution to the work of this important forum. We shall definitely distance ourselves from the unrealistic positions which Bulgaria held at times in the past. We in Bulgaria are now transforming the country into a State where the rule of law and democracy is the ultimate objective and we shall not stray, I pray, from this path.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank His Excellency the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Azikiwe.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): Mr. President, my delegation is very pleased to see you presiding over our work during the final phase of the first part of our session. Your experience and outstanding diplomatic skills will no doubt assist the Conference to advance its work. Your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Carl Magnus Hyltenius, deserves our appreciation for the very able manner in which he successfully conducted our work during his presidency. A number of colleagues have joined us since I last took the floor at the plenary. May I take this opportunity to welcome the Ambassadors of Algeria, Australia, Bulgaria, France, Poland and Yugoslavia? Furthermore, I would like to thank the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria for the honour he confers on our Conference by his presence this morning. We listened with great interest to his important statement.

At this time last year, the international community was buoyed with optimism that the world was on the verge of a new era of peace. That optimism has received a severe setback. Recent events in the Gulf clearly demonstrate that we are still living in a dangerous world. Yet another devasting war has ended, leaving in its wake enormous loss of lives and property. Threats to the international order are ever present, and the maintenance of international peace and security continues to be a never-ending struggle. The lesson for the international community is to remain vigilant and guard against complacency. Peace and security are never won for all time, but can be constructed on the basis of political choice and consensus within any region. We must strive to pre-empt rather than react to security threats. We must renew our commitment to the non-use of force and the resolution of international and regional problems as well as conflicts by peaceful means.

Arms transfer has become a disturbing phenomenon which must be addressed. In the continuing controversy, events in the Gulf with destabilizing global effects are partly the result of the unrestrained transfer of arms to an already volatile region. The events call for sober

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

reflection on the unbridled transfer of arms, particularly to regions of conflict. Instability in the third world has been further promoted by the requirement of some countries which have been subjected to acts of aggression to embark upon the acquisition of military potentials that they could certainly ill afford. Although previous efforts to place the control of arms transfers in the context of multilateral negotiations have failed, the time is now right for such consideration. The relationship between conventional arms and nuclear proliferation should be given careful attention. The increasing sophistication and destructive power of conventional weapons constitute ever-growing threats. The transfer to other regions of such weapons that will become superfluous as the result of disarmament agreements in the European arena poses the danger of escalation. Conventional disarmament must continue to be resolutely pursued within the context of overall global disarmament. Conventional disarmament in Europe should therefore lead to progress in other disarmament areas.

Security has always through history been the justification for the acquisition of weapons by States. The fear of military inferiority vis-à-vis a rival power has always fuelled competitive acquisition. The most obvious manifestion of the bipolar vision of the world has been the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and the body of doctrine built around it that incorporates the use of nuclear weapons. Even if one were a believer in primary deterrence, it is clear that this concept has now lost its relevance in the enhancement of security. The crucial question is whether these weapons which are supposed to have served the need of the past era have any relevance in the fundamentally changed political and security situation in Europe. The tremendous improvement in super-Power relations and the end of East-West idealogical rivalry no doubt gives great hope that the impetus for the nuclear arms race will be reversed. The outlook so far, however, is that the improved relations are likely to remove the pressure for accelerated nuclear disarmament negotiations. A sense of security based on the unlikelihood of a nuclear war between the super-Powers has already led to a loss of momentum and urgency in the START negotiations. Though super-Power cooperation is beneficial to regional problems, it has not and cannot eliminate them all. We must be determined to avoid taking one step forward and two steps backwards: one step forward in having the right political atmosphere, but two steps backwards by stifling multilateral efforts and denying ourselves what should have been the positive input of bilateral efforts. Nowhere has the need for global cooperation been more pressing than in disarmament. Regrettably nowhere also has the result been so dismal. The multifaceted problems of the world today are so complex that no single State or combination of a few States can presume to be able to dictate solutions. Such an approach would defer indefinitely the goal of achieving a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

In seeking to broaden the basis of the non-proliferation regime, therefore, greater attention will have to be paid to the issue of nuclear disarmament by all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States. As the START negotiations will result in only about a 30 per cent reduction, the remaining arsenals of the two super-Powers will still be far above the level of the other three nuclear-weapon States. The gap will be further compounded if modernization is to continue. Nuclear disarmament cannot be said to acquire a multilateral irreversible character until it involves all nuclear-weapon States

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

and all categories of nuclear weapons. It cannot be irreversible until there is a complete freeze on nuclear arsenals and a stop to modernization. Indeed, efforts to limit, reduce and eliminate such weapons are often outpaced by rapid scientific developments and the application of new technological advances to the fresh acquisition of weapons or qualitative refinement of earlier weapons. An indispensible measure in this respect, which should complement negotiations for deep reductions in nuclear arsenals and means of delivery, is the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such a treaty will in the view of many, have the dual effect of impeding the evolution of a new generation of nuclear weapons as well as constraining those that wish to be newcomers to the nuclear weapons club.

At a time when the super-Powers have committed themselves to negotiated reductions of their nuclear arsenals on a continuous basis, it is incomprehensible that the rationale for a CTBT should be lost on them. It is a basic step forward towards a credible non-proliferation régime. The recently concluded Amendment Conference in New York provided an opportunity in this regard. Much as we cannot disguise our disappointment over the inability of the Amendment Conference to reach a consensus on the draft declaration, it would however be erroneous and misleading for anyone to conclude that it was a failure. Apart from being a significant landmark in the efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive test ban, it overwhelmingly voted "to mandate the President ... to conduct consultations with a view to achieving progress on those issues [verification and sanctions] and resuming the work of the Conference at an appropriate time". Indeed, the Amendment Conference is the strongest signal ever that the international community has sent to the nuclear-weapon States on the issue of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In the Secretary-General's message to the Conference on 22 January he affirmed that "despite the differences in approach to the whole issue, there is overwhelming support on the part of Member States for a significant role by the Conference on Disarmament in dealing with the various aspects" of a nuclear test ban. Thus we believe that there is an obvious need to keep active this initiative in the immediate future, to take stock of those negotiations between sessions and give necessary political momentum at the appropriate time.

The spectre of the use of chemical weapons during the Gulf war has dramatically brought to the fore once again the need for the urgent conclusion of a convention on the comprehensive and total prohibition of chemical weapons. My delegation shares the concern within the CD and the rest of the international community over the delay in concluding the negotiations. The very high expectations that were generated by the Paris Conference on chemical weapons in January 1989 have yet to be realized. Our negotiations have reached a critical stage where the issues are now being addressed more purposefully than ever before. While my delegation appreciates and indeed respects the concerns of some delegations on a number of decisive issues under negotiation, our overriding consideration should be to ensure that we have a convention that members of the international community will be willing to adhere to and ratify. We therefore welcome the increasing attention paid in the Ad Hoc Committee to the question of universality. Similarly, it is

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

important for intensive consultations to be conducted regularly with non-members of the Conference on Disarmament, who do not have the opportunity to examine the provisions of the draft convention thoroughly and its effects on their national security.

My delegation is of the view that when the convention is finally concluded, it is essential to provide a genuine and credible guarantee to parties who do not produce or store chemical weapons in a way that will enhance rather than diminish the security of all States parties. These weapons of mass and indiscriminate destruction are morally reprehensible because their targets are not military installations or physical structures essential to military endeavour. They are always directed against innocent civilians and their environment. In practical terms, it means a convention that includes a very effective verification régime that will instil in States parties the confidence that its provisions are being complied with, or, where this is not so, that violations will be properly detected; a convention that will ensure that, where violations are detected, they will be decisively dealt with; a convention that will in particular be non-discriminatory among the States parties; a convention that will also foster cooperation among States parties, in the chemical industry. Similarly there is a need for genuine safeguards so that the principle of prohibition does not adversely affect chemical industries in the developing countries. My delegation is satisfied that the Ad Hoc Committee has got off to a good start this session under your able guidance. We expect the Committee to intensify its efforts to conclude outstanding work on the convention. The spirit of mutual concession and of mature compromise is required at this stage to overcome the outstanding differences.

We cannot help but register our profound regret that the Ad Hoc Committee on outer space does not have a negotiating mandate. The real question is: What should we do? We can go on as before, sitting it out and hoping that the fundamental problems some delegations do have might change. Or we can undertake constructive and courageous efforts in enriching the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. In this respect, my delegation welcomes the bold initiative of the Chairman, Ambassador García Moritán, in preparing a non-binding list that will enable us to embark on substantive consideration in a more practical way. We believe that the present legal régime is inadequate. Rapid advancement in science and technology has led to the development of new weapon systems unforeseen during the negotiation of the outer space Treaty and other relevant laws. There is so much that we can and must do. It is going to take a great deal of vision and political will on our part, especially from those who have the primary responsibility of preventing an arms race in outer space. The CD needs a breakthrough in real disarmament measures for the sake of maintaining its credibility as a negotiating forum. I believe that in this year's session we should avoid a "business as usual" approach. This is an approach which diffuses our attention on general discussions on all the issues, ending with no action on any. Rather, we should make this an action-oriented session in order to achieve concrete results.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. And I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Japan, Ambassador Donowaki.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): Mr. President, first of all I should like to express my sincere congratulations upon your assumption of the very important post of President of the Conference. I should also like to express appreciation to your predecessors, Ambassador Rasaputram and Ambassador Hyltenius for their very important contribution in setting us on the right track in our work. Since this is the first occasion for me to speak during this year's session, I should also like to welcome the newcomers among us, including the just arrived Ambassador of France, and I should also like to express appreciation for the presence here today of the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. I listened with great interest to his important statement.

At the beginning of last year's session of the CD, our esteemed colleague from Brazil, Ambassador de Azambuja, provoked us by asking how our Conference, which is both structurally and conceptually a child of the cold war, can adapt to the new times. He was referring to the unsatisfactory state of our work in the CD - our failure to produce concrete achievements while super-Power bilateral and European regional East-West disarmament negotiations were harvesting achievements. The question posed here was of considerable importance. When the impasse due to the East-West confrontation was broken as a result of the ending of the cold war, various disarmament negotiations between the two super-Powers and the European East-West nations could achieve major breakthroughs one after another. In the CD, which is another important negotiating forum for disarmament, no concrete achievements on its agenda items emerged for more than a decade mainly because of the impasse due to the East-West confrontation. What is unfortunate about the CD is the fact that even after the easing of the East-West tension and the breaking of the impasse, it still fails to produce any concrete achievements. Why is this so? On this question we may be able to take either a pessimistic view or an optimistic view. If you take a pessimistic view, the argument may run as follows. The CD was created structurally and conceptually as a child of the cold war era. The presence of member States other than the Eastern and Western member States in the CD was a device to facilitate mediation of the East-West conflict on disarmament matters. However, the division was so great that no concrete agreements resulted. With the ending of the cold war, the Eastern and Western member States may be able to arrive at agreements without the help of the presence of other member States. Of course, the presence of other States will continue to be required, since the CD is a negotiating body for global and not only for East-West disarmament agreements. However, the failure of the CD so far even under the changed circumstances must be a signal that the CD should be reformulated to meet challenges and requirements of the emerging post-cold-war era.

I, for myself, do not subscribe to such a pessimistic view. The view of an optimist would go as follows. One should show a little more patience about the pace of work in the CD. The ending of the cold war is already bringing about major breakthroughs in the work of the CD. It is only due to the inherent complexity of the task of the CD, which is to produce global agreements not limited to the East-West context, and also the professional and circumspect approach the CD takes as compared with the more politically oriented approach in East-West negotiations, that concrete achievements by the CD tend to lag behind other negotiations. As to the need for the

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

reformulation and reorientation of the CD to meet the requirements of the new times, a thorough and intensive review will certainly be required. However, in the mean time there is no reason to consider the CD as it is now to be seriously hampered in functioning properly in this very crucial time of transition, since most of the key countries and regions of the world today are already well represented in the CD. Furthermore, if there are any nations who think they should be in the CD, they can participate in the work of the CD as observer States.

The optimistic view about the work of the CD that I have just described can be substantiated by taking a careful look at the status of the chemical weapons convention negotiations. It was in 1984, when the United States introduced a draft convention in CD/500, that the concept of mandatory inspections or inspections on request took firm hold as an important mechanism for ensuring the reliability and effectiveness of the CWC. In 1987, as a result of President Gorbachev's "new thinking" diplomacy, the Soviet Union came to support the concept of mandatory inspections. This was already the beginning of the end of the cold war, from which the CWC negotiations received a tremendous boost. Two years later, when the CD still had no CWC and the Iran-Iraq war produced unfortunate instances of the use of chemical weapons, the Paris Conference was convened in January 1989, and then the Canberra Conference later in the same year, in order to encourage the early conclusion of the CWC. The year 1990 was regarded as a critical year for the negotiations. The signing in June of that year of the bilateral United States-Soviet agreement to cease production of CW and to destroy most of their CW stockpiles was indeed a historic step forward, immensely facilitating the CWC negotiations. On the other hand, one has to admit the enormous impact the new concept of inspection on request had in store, because it was to be applied globally, in contrast to the CFE Treaty, which applied only to Europe, and also because it was meant to involve not only military but also civilian industrial facilities. The complexity and sensitivity of the issue was clearly demonstrated when the United States and the Soviet Union failed to agree on the protocol on inspection procedures at the end of last year, in spite of their commitment to do so. Thus it becomes clear that the CD cannot be criticized for its incompetence, or for its failure to take advantage of the ending of the cold war.

Another important factor delaying the negotiations last year was the debate on the question of the universality of the future CWC. In last year's United States-Soviet bilateral agreement, it was agreed that the concept of a residual security stock would be introduced into the draft CWC in order to ensure universal adherence to the future convention. However, the proposal, which amounted to the creation of unequal status for States parties to the future convention between CW haves and have-nots, was bound to be met with strong opposition and resentment from a number of States participating in the negotiations.

I took up the issue of inspections upon request and the issue of universality as the most important issues on which the CWC negotiations were stalled during the course of last year. However, I did not do so out of despair. On the contrary, my delegation was encouraged by the fact that the most crucial issues finally came to be seriously and constructively discussed

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

during the course of last year under the able chairmanship of your predecessor, Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius. Similarly, some other remaining issues of importance were tackled energetically and considerable progress was achieved during the course of last year. This year my delegation is pleased to note the prevailing sense among delegations that we are nearing our final goal. The crucial issues of inspection upon request and universal adherence, as well as other similarly important remaining issues, are now being actively pursued under your dedicated and skilful chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee. Working group chairmen and friends of the chair selected by you are also demonstrating devotion and competence. In addition, group co-ordinators are working harder than ever. All these indications show that the momentum is rising. Formal and informal consultations, as well as group and bilateral consultations, are fully geared up to the early achievement of our common goal. Therefore, my delegation does not find it necessary to dwell upon any specific issues in today's plenary statement, except to reaffirm its strong commitment to work, under your able guidance, for the early conclusion of the CWC. I also wish to take this opportunity to remind the Conference that Japan, like the CSCE member States, declared its intention to become one of the original signatory States of the CWC last October during the session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

The second issue I wish to take up today in connection with the role of the CD in the changing world of today is the question of a nuclear test ban. The establishment last year of the Ad Hoc Committee on this issue, and its subsequent re-establishment this year, represented a truly significant change in the attitude of CD delegations, as compared to the preceding seven years' sterile impasse. Of course, this was due to the spirit of compromise and flexibility demonstrated by all the groups and delegations of the CD. My delegation was particularly pleased to see that after the fourth NPT review conference in September last year, and after the PTBT Amendment Conference of January this year, the same spirit prevailed again in the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee.

In spite of recent remarkable achievements in the United States-Soviet nuclear testing talks, slow progress towards a comprehensive test ban has over the years been a source of strong discontent among a number of non-nuclear-weapon States, and in order to apply international pressure for the early realization of a CTB, a confrontational approach might have been a natural choice. In the CD also, when the establishment of an ad hoc committee was considered in the last few years, delegations were divided into two camps, one refusing to begin the work if it was a negotiation and the other refusing to do so unless it was a negotiation. Such a stalemate now appears to have been overcome thanks to the spirit of compromise and flexibility. Furthermore, my delegation was pleased to note that, under the skilful chairmanship of Ambassador Chadha, the NTB Ad Hoc Committee appears to be getting down to business - to the business of having a meaningful dialogue. Indeed, it is my delegation's belief that once we are engaged in a dialogue, and succeed in deepening common understanding on the nature of a nuclear test ban, we should be able to work out together a satisfactory solution to the problem based upon such a common understanding. On the other hand, although Japan stands for nuclear disarmament and for the early realization of a CTB, Japan is of the opinion that since the question of a CTB is a very complex and

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

delicate matter involving the security of nations, its realization will have to be on a step-by-step basis. On this and other points of importance, my delegation has been and will continue to be expressing its views in the NTB Ad Hoc Committee in more detail. My delegation wishes to reiterate its expectation that the substantive work resumed in the Ad Hoc Committee will prove to be successful and fruitful, leading us ultimately to a satisfactory solution of this long-standing historic issue.

When we think about the role of the CD in the emerging post-cold-war era, we are all aware that the end of East-West confrontation does not necessarily lead us to a more peaceful and stable world. The unfortunate experience of the Gulf war reminded us of the danger of even more frequent and disastrous regional conflicts. Therefore, the greatest concern of our times is the question of whether and how we can prevent a second and third incident similar to the one Iraq unlawfully started. In this connection, the question of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the question of the abnormal build-up of conventional weapons in particular regions, are likely to be focused upon with great attention at every possible opportunity in our international dealings. The relevance of the CD as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament matters will certainly be judged by its ability to meet the concerns of our times as described above. As far as the prevention of weapons of mass destruction is concerned, the early conclusion of the CWC will no doubt become the single most important contribution by the CD for the time being, while any much longer delay in delivering the CWC will cast serious doubt on the competence of the CD. As to biological weapons, a number of delegations appear to take the view that the updating of the BWC by incorporating a workable and reliable verification mechanism would be a natural and urgent task for the CD after the conclusion of the CWC. As for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we have in place the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and the strengthening of the Treaty régime, we have to admit, is not under the responsibility of the CD alone. As to the question of the abnormal build-up of conventional arms in particular regions, the dangers of which we have been reminded of by the latest events in the Gulf, Japan, as a nation that has long enforced a policy of strict control on arms exports, may be in a good position to urge other major suppliers of arms to exercise restraint. However, arms export control is a well-known complex problem. Denial of arms supplies might have a destabilizing effect on those regions where the existing imbalance of forces poses a real threat to the security of some nations in the region. Furthermore, mere restraint in arms transfer naturally works in favour of nations with an arms production capability. In any case, it remains to be seen whether the question of international arms transfers can best be addressed at the CD. On the other hand, we may be able to make a modest step forward by enhancing transparency and openness in international arms transfers. This is one of the so-called confidence-building measures. It has to be applied globally, and still it has great relevance to regional security problems. Furthermore, a study on the question of transparency in international arms transfers now being conducted by a group of experts under the auspices of the United Nations is scheduled to be completed this summer. Although confidence-building measures are not disarmament per se, there is no doubt about their usefulness in preventing an arms race, and the CD must be the right forum for looking into the matter with a view to working out appropriate international undertakings. In this way the CD may become more attuned to the requirements of our times.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

When we take a look at our agenda in the CD as adopted (CD/1049), we realize that as many as three items are nuclear-related and that pertinent issues including the BWC are not given any place. Of course, my delegation recognizes the importance of a nuclear test ban, and will continue to work hard for its early realization. None the less, there is no denying that the idea of giving this agenda item such high priority was a by-product of the culmination of the cold war era. Some 10 years ago when there was no realistic possibility of a reduction in nuclear arms, a nuclear test ban, however unachievable it might actually have been, might have had its own appeal as the most important step forward in the direction of nuclear disarmament. Today we find ourselves, let us hope, in a vastly different world. My delegation is aware that the agenda of the CD has its own history. Often it is explained that our agenda is based on the famous "Decalogue", which in turn is said to have taken into account the relevant provisions of the documents of SSOD I and II. Then the question may arise: How come the Decalogue appears to be more flexible, allowing more room for the inclusion of the urgent subjects of our times, including the BWC, as agenda items of the CD? It is against this background that my delegation was pleased to see the resumption of the informal open-ended consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the CD under the chairmanship of our esteemed colleague, Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan. In this fast-changing world, the CD must certainly work hard to meet the requirements of our times by concluding, as early as possible, the long-standing CWC negotiations, and by placing on its agenda the most appropriate and urgently required items of our times.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to draw the attention of the Conference to the fact that the Government of Japan issued a statement yesterday entitled "Japanese near-term responses to the problems in the Middle East". It contains a section on arms control and disarmament. Since the statement clarifies the official position of my Government on some of the issues I took up in my intervention, copies of an English translation of the statement are being distributed to all delegations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Japan for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Arteaga.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): At the outset, Sir, I should like to extend to you the expression of our pleasure at seeing you presiding over the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Your wealth of experience, your wide-ranging knowledge of disarmament issues and your recognized ability are the best guarantee that, under your guidance, our work will be productive and constructive. We should also like to place on record our congratulations and our gratitude both to Ambassador Rasaputram and to Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden for the skilful and effective way in which they conducted the work of the Conference in past weeks. We should also like to welcome the Ambassadors of Algeria, Australia, Bulgaria, France, Poland and Yugoslavia, who have recently joined the work of the Conference.

Incontestably, the political developments that have occurred in Eastern and Central Europe have reaffirmed the importance of some of the concepts and principles guiding the conduct of the United Nations since 1945 as a factor of

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

equilibrium and stability in the difficult process of international relations, namely respect for human rights, self-determination of peoples and the expansion of the concept of international security. Of course these developments and the acceptance of new perceptions of international politics have made it possible to overcome the cold war structure as a political model of the international system. As the promising potentialities offered by events in Europe were being evaluated, the international community was confronted with a difficult and hazardous Gulf crisis that prompted a firm and resolute response.

In the light of the relaxation in Soviet-American relations, we have heard statements regarding the need to make progress in moulding a new international order. We are convinced that the emergence of a new world structure should be based on balance, and on recognition of the role which each of the organs in the United Nations system should play for international peace and security, without establishing a hierarchy amongst them. Though it is true that the Security Council has been strengthened as a consequence of the profound and rapid transformations experienced in the international area and through the Gulf crisis, it is no less true that these changes should act as a catalyst to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament and render it more effective, as well as the work of other United Nations bodies. Likewise we believe that the future international order should not rest on the special interests of a small group of countries, as this situation could lead in a negative way to the formation of a limited international system disregarding the general interest of the international community regarding the major challenges it should confront. We cannot conceal that the political developments have far outrun the cautious pace of negotiations on arms control and disarmament, and partly as a result the validity of military doctrines is now being practically questioned as regards their existence. Consequently there is an urgent need for these doctrines to be replaced by appropriate structures which make possible the rapid elimination of the old antagonistic approaches which have persisted for over 40 years.

One of the paramount items before the Conference on Disarmament relates to the nuclear test ban. The most effective way of achieving this goal, which all share, lies in the signature of a treaty on this issue. The continuation of nuclear testing could have an adverse affect on efforts aimed at strengthening the legal non-proliferation régime. That turns this question into one of the most complex challenges the international community must confront during this decade. The signature of a treaty containing a general and complete ban on these tests would be beneficial to the international system, since this measure would act as a political deterrent to any initiative by a State or group of States aimed at increasing horizontal proliferation with its inherent dangers. If, however, these tests continue to be carried out, they would undoubtedly offer some non-nuclear States the political excuse to remain aloof from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which in turn would confirm the discriminatory nature that a good number of States ascribe to it.

We are convinced that the maintenance of the policy of nuclear testing should not shelter behind the alleged need to guarantee the reliability, effectiveness and safety of nuclear arsenals, or the inadequacies of current verification measures. In our view these arguments or excuses constitute

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

dilatory tactics that seek to sidestep a security goal shared by all States. Consequently, we believe that delays on this issue would undermine the future international order to which we all aspire. The signature of a treaty of this kind would generate a positive impact on the reversal of the arms race. As regards the non-proliferation Treaty, we believe that its substantive extension after 1995 will obviously be linked to the enactment of that disarmament measure in the short term, as was reflected in the negotiations at the fourth review conference.

In order to complement the work of this body, and without attempting to disregard the paramount responsibility devolving upon the Conference on Disarmament, Venezuela, along with five other nations, urged the holding of the recent conference to amend the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty with the firm resolve to seek compromise formulas designed to eradicate that practice. In putting forward this type of proposal, we were prompted by a constructive spirit based on principles set forth in the Treaty itself. On behalf of the six States which sponsored the amendment proposal, the delegation of Mexico submitted document CD/1054, containing a draft of protocol II on verification of the amendment we proposed to the Treaty. We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee will give this document proper consideration. In the same context, the delegation of Venezuela welcomes the declaration of Foz do Iguaçú adopted on 28 November 1990 by the Presidents of Argentina and Brazil, in which the two heads of State reiterated their countries' readiness to use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes, the desire to promote the full entry into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco), and the possible signature of a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, with its positive impact as regards verification. Certainly this type of political event once again reaffirms the conviction and commitment of Latin America to non-proliferation and disarmament.

It is indisputable that the international community has agreed to preserve and conserve outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind. Even though it is recognized that weapons have not been deployed in space, there are certain weapons or systems of such weapons that could be placed in that environment. We observe that the talks on strategic nuclear weapons carried out by the United States and the Soviet Union have not succeeded in reaching a solution to the problem of the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the creation of new defensive systems. It seems that the discussion on the relationship between offensive and defensive weapons is designed to legitimize the deployment of defensive strategic systems, in any environment, including outer space. The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies is in force. We have all recognized that this instrument plays a very important role in regulating activities related to outer space. What was not foreseen at the time when it was negotiated and entered into force was the possibility that strategic defence weapons and systems might be developed which could operate in space, from space or towards space. Hence the repeated assertion on numerous occasions that the legal régime applicable to space is inadequate to effectively prevent an arms race in this environment, and it is for this reason that we have also affirmed the need to negotiate specific measures designed to prevent an arms race in space. For six years, the

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has been operating and has been considering the item. In many respects, over these years, the Committee has played a useful role which is reflected in the reports on its work. From the work done by the Committee, it can be concluded that the stage of general and substantive consideration of the various issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as the existing legal régime, has already been passed.

From now on, it is necessary to focus all efforts on the identification and drawing up of specific measures to achieve the central goal of item 5 of the agenda of the Conference, which is precisely to prevent an arms race in outer space. The proposals which have been submitted on specific measures offer a sound basis for carrying out this work through careful consideration of them, identifying areas of agreement or convergence and orienting the work of the Committee towards action. This set of proposals includes a proposal submitted by Venezuela for an amendment to article IV of the 1967 space Treaty to change the scope of this Treaty from a partial ban into a total ban. This is, if you will, a "positive" assessment of the work of the Committee, and hence we are even more perplexed at the fact that no progress has been achieved in the consideration of measures designed effectively to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Among the items included in its agenda, there is one on which the Conference on Disarmament has made progress in fulfilling its role as a multilateral negotiating body. Let us say that this is the only one on which we have made progress - the issue of chemical weapons. The process of negotiation on the draft convention has been arduous. Many persistent obstacles in the past negotiations have been overcome. Proof of this is the current content of appendices I and II to the "rolling text" of the draft convention. The draft convention sets forth the commitment of all States parties not to use, develop, produce, acquire, stock-pile, retain or transfer chemical weapons, as well as the commitment to their destruction. The scope of the convention is quite clear: the total and complete destruction of chemical weapons. Bearing in mind that there is a prohibition of use contained in the Geneva Protocol of 1925 - a question that has been incorporated in the scope of the future convention - we are concerned that this reference has not yet been included in the mandate of the Committee. Also included is a clear commitment to the total destruction of chemical weapons over a 10-year period. Recognizing this commitment and the scope of the Convention, which is that of total prohibition and destruction, provisions which ensure the maintenance of certain CW arsenals at the end of the destruction period would be unacceptable at this stage of the negotiations. In that context, we reiterate that the fundamental element which must characterize this instrument is that of universality, and to achieve this the scope set by the convention should be that of total and complete prohibition and destruction, establishing no rights for chemical-weapon States to maintain certain arsenals, nor any postponement of the obligation to destroy all chemical weapons as well as CW production facilities. An issue requiring consideration by the Committee relates to the financing of the organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Last year Working Group C held consultations on this issue, the results of which are currently attached in appendix 2 of the "rolling text". The inclusion of a reference on this item in the draft convention is an important

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

step which will make the future work of the Committee easier. The negotiation of a Convention to establish a total ban on chemical weapons, which has involved the consideration of a number of political and technical issues of extreme complexity, and major efforts and sacrifices on the part of the negotiators, has proved that the Conference can make progress in multilateral negotiations when there is political will to do so. The time would be right if we take into account the proposal for the holding of a ministerial session of the Conference on Disarmament devoted to the chemical weapons issue. Presumably this conference would be designed to overcome the obstacles affecting the negotiations on the convention. However, at the same time we believe that we cannot come to this session with the same problems as those which exist now, and hence we have to focus our efforts on overcoming them and to hold the conference at the time deemed most appropriate. A modest contribution by Venezuela to the efforts designed to achieve the complete prohibition of chemical weapons is the holding in Caracas of a regional seminar which will basically revolve around the question of chemical weapons. This seminar will be held from 1 to 5 July of the current year. The seminar, as we have previously stated, will be designed to acquaint all Latin American and Caribbean States with the scope, the purposes and goals of the convention, the verification machinery that is to be set up, and generally speaking all the legal and technical aspects of the future convention on chemical weapons in order to facilitate the internal administrative and legislative process that is to be followed for the early ratification, entry into force and implementation of this instrument. It is hoped that the participating Governments will give preference to designating officials from their foreign ministries or other governmental bodies who in one way or another would participate in decision-making relating to the adoption and setting in motion of the convention.

An item increasingly requiring the special attention of the international community relates to the protection of the environment. The arms race in its use of technology, the manufacture and use of certain types of weapons, has had serious repercussions in this field. A clear example is the case of continued nuclear testing. We also have the example of accidents such as that which occurred in the nuclear plant at Chernobyl, which had adverse consequences for the natural environment and compels us to seek energy efficiency and the development of safer sources. Another example that caused serious damage to the environment in the Middle East region is the destruction of oil wells during the Gulf war.

Among measures designed to achieve disarmament use must be made of a series of methods which can have equally serious impacts on the ecological system, such as the application of various systems for the destruction of weapons, the transport of weapons for that purpose, waste treatment and the destruction of production facilities, among others. Hence we consider that the measures taken should include provisions guaranteeing the protection of the environment. Of relevance in this respect, in our view, and in the specific case of chemical weapons, is the proposal submitted by the delegation of Peru for the inclusion of an article in the draft convention setting forth a commitment by the States parties to the convention to take the necessary steps to ensure that the preservation and cleaning up of the environment is regarded as a priority task in the implementation of the convention.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Venezuela for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me. That concludes my list of speakers for today, and I would like to ask if whether any of the distinguished representatives wishes to take the floor. I see that the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador Errera, has asked for the floor.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): I would very simply like to thank you, Mr. President, for the very kind words of welcome that you addressed to me. It goes without saying that for me it is a great honour and pleasure to represent my country in this Conference and to join this eminent assembly which is both a witness to and a protagonist in the changes or upheavals that are affecting international equilibria. To join it at a time when disarmament issues are acquiring a new dimension, issues related to disarmament and arms control, and when they have perhaps never been so present. To join it at the moment when you have been called upon to preside over our work, and on that occasion allow me to wish you every success in your important duties. I would also like to thank you for what you said about my predecessor and friend, Pierre Morel, I know what contribution he made to the work of the Conference. He will therefore be particularly grateful for the message which I will convey to him. I know, too, that Pierre Morel would not have been able to discharge his duties here successfully without the trust and friendship of all - the member countries, the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the secretariat - and you may be sure that I will be determined to promote and consolidate that spirit of trust. Thus I would like to assure you and all the members of the Conference of my readiness and that of my delegation, while upholding the views and positions of my country, to spare no effort to move forward in our negotiations. I will do so with the ambition that is required by the importance of the stakes, but I will do so also with the modesty that is called for by the complex nature of the issues that we have to resolve.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of France for his statement and wish to ask once again if there is anyone else wishing to take the floor before we move on to certain organizational matters. I see no one else wishes to take the floor.

As I have already indicated in my introductory remarks, as a result of the efforts of my predecessors as President of the Conference on Disarmament, the work on practically all topics is on the right track, and we have a relatively small number of issues, essentially organizational in nature, which may require our attention during my presidency. These issues are well known to all of us, and so I will refer to them only briefly.

First of all, the dates of the next session of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to detect and identify seismic events. You will recall that Ambassador Hyltenius, my predecessor, informed the Conference that further consultations would be required before we were in a position to take a decision on this question. Those consultations have not yet been concluded, and I intend to follow up on this issue in the weeks to come.

The second matter that I wish to draw to your attention relates to the consultations to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Conference as you know, informal open-ended consultations on this matter were held under the

(The President)

leadership of Ambassador Kamal last Tuesday, and further consultations will be conducted during the second half of the annual session. For the time being, obviously, there is no need to revert to this question.

Next, as you also know, the distinguished representative of Mexico, Ambassador Miguel Marín Bosch, has been appointed special co-ordinator and mandated to seek agreement on an appropriate organizational framework under agenda item 8, namely the comprehensive programme of disarmament. It is my understanding that Ambassador Marín Bosch is currently engaged in consultations on this matter, and we will be informed about the results as soon as those results are arrived at.

And, lastly, the question of the composition of the Conference on Disarmament. You also know very well that my predecessor, Ambassador Hylteniu[illegible], undertook consultations on this very important and very delicate issue. In pursuance of my duties as President, it is my intention to continue those consultations on this subject.

Those were the matters that I wished to draw to the attention of the distinguished representatives. And now I would like to invite you all to take a look at the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies next week. That timetable was distributed at my request by the secretariat of the Conference. The timetable includes meetings up to 28 March, when we shall conclude the first part of the annual session. I would also like to draw to your attention the fact that the programme of work for the coming week schedules two plenary meetings, in accordance with the agreement reached last year. Of course, the schedule is, as usual, merely indicative, and is subject to change if the need arises. If there are no objections, I will take it that the Conference adopts this timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): As agreed by the Conference in the timetable of meetings for this week, immediately after our plenary meeting we shall hold an informal meeting devoted to the substance of agenda item 2.

I have no other business for today, and therefore I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held next Tuesday, 26 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at noon.